

**Proposed Annual Bicycle and Pedestrian Count Program for Alameda County  
DRAFT for ACTAC Review – April 7, 2009**

**Proposed Program:**

ACTIA and the CMA are proposing that bicycle and pedestrian counts be conducted annually at 30 locations throughout the county, expanded from the current LOS Monitoring Study bicycle counts at 12 locations every two years. These 30 locations include all 12 LOS Monitoring Study locations. The additional locations were selected from local jurisdiction suggestions, as well as locations previously counted by MTC or UC Berkeley Traffic Safety Center (TSC). These counts will be conducted on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, or Thursdays between 3 – 5 PM, based on TSC methodology.

The locations were selected based on the following criteria:

- At least one location in each of the 15 Alameda County jurisdictions
- On the Countywide Bicycle and/or Pedestrian Network
- As a whole, the locations reflect a range of characteristics:
  - o Nearby Transit
  - o Within ¼ mile of schools or trails
  - o Land use variation: commercial, residential, industrial, office parks
  - o Density: high, medium, low
  - o Roadway characteristics
  - o Demographics

**Background:**

Anecdotal reports suggest that walking and biking has increased in Alameda County. However, there is very little consistent data on biking and pedestrian volumes, as compared to motor traffic.

The CMA's biennial Level of Service (LOS) Monitoring Study has included bicycle counts at 12 locations voluntarily conducted by local jurisdictions, in 2002, 2004, 2006 and 2008. In addition, some local jurisdictions conduct their own counts on a varied basis. The Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) conducted an annual regional bicycle and pedestrian count program from 2002 - 2004, and is now interested in re-starting this program. In 2008, UC Berkeley Traffic Safety Center, with funding from ACTIA, also conducted bicycle and pedestrian counts at 50 locations to develop a model to predict pedestrian and bicycle volumes.

**Rationale:**

Having consistent walking and bicycling data is important for many reasons, including:

- Baseline data: What are volume trends from year to year? The methodology for data collection needs to be consistent in order to be comparable.
- Return on investment: How many people are using the new bike/pedestrian facilities that have been built?
- Safety: Certain locations have high numbers of bike/pedestrian crashes, but what is the risk exposure rate relative to bike/pedestrian volumes?
- Multi-modal level of service: Climate change impacts are pushing for changes in transportation, from traditional automobile-oriented LOS metrics to measure trips made by all modes together: driving, transit, biking and walking.
- Planning: More robust data is needed to improve decision-making for updating the Countywide Bicycle and Pedestrian Plans.

**Cost:**

The estimated cost for bicycle and pedestrian counts at 30 locations is \$10,000 annually. In the longer term, ACTIA and the CMA are exploring funding options for counts to be conducted on a continuous

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basis, by professional counters. Local jurisdictions which are interested in contributing to the effort (either in funding or personnel resources) would be welcomed. The counts could also be done by volunteers, as proposed for 2009.

**Proposed 2009 Counts:**

The UC Berkeley TSC is very interested in doing counts this spring to validate their pedestrian-volume prediction model. In addition, MTC has begun an effort to reinstate regional bicycle/pedestrian counts. These two efforts have been the impetus for generating a list of annual countywide count locations this year. Because there is no funding allocated for this year's counts, ACTIA proposes to collect data in a partnership with TSC using trained volunteers. See the attached solicitation for volunteers.

**List of Proposed Alameda County Annual Bike/Ped Count Locations**

## VOLUNTEER SOLICITATION FOR BIKE/PED COUNTS

"Count Pedestrians and Bicyclists –Volunteers Needed – Get Trained on April 8th & 15th"

We are seeking volunteers to train for a new annual pedestrian and bicycle counting program. This counting program is a collaboration between the Alameda County Transportation Improvement Authority, UC Berkeley Traffic Safety Center, the Metropolitan Transportation Commission, and other Bay Area public agencies and advocacy groups.

Informal observations suggest that the numbers of bicyclists and pedestrians have been growing throughout Alameda County and the rest of the Bay Area for several years. But unlike cars and transit-riders which have been counted regularly in the past, there have been few systematic counts of people walking and bicycling. Officials and researchers don't have a good grasp of how many people are walking and bicycling or where they are using these modes in different neighborhoods and communities.

Having information on walking and bicycling numbers is important for many reasons, including:

- Baseline data: How many people are biking? Walking? Where? What are volume trends from year to year?

- Return on investment in bike lanes, trails and sidewalks: how many people use bike/pedestrian facilities after they are built?

- Safety: Certain locations have high numbers of bike/pedestrian crashes, but what is the risk exposure rate? Is it high or low relative to bike/pedestrian volumes? How should safety improvements be prioritized?

The trained volunteers will initially be asked to do counts in Alameda County in April and May 2009, but volunteers will also be needed in the following months to count throughout the Bay Area. Since the method of counting will be the same for every location, volunteers completing the training in Alameda County will be able to conduct counts anywhere in the Bay Area. The UC Berkeley Traffic Safety Center will conduct the training. The training will take place in downtown Oakland. Actual counts will be conducted on weekday afternoons as well as Saturdays.

If you are interested in finding out more about this counting program and the training, please come to an orientation Wednesday, April 8th from 6:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. in the ACTIA Conference Room, 3rd Floor, 1333 Broadway in Downtown Oakland. The field training will be held on Wednesday, April 15th from 6:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m., location to be announced. Attendance at both sessions is strongly encouraged.

For more information about the training, please contact: Lindsay Arnold ([larnold@berkeley.edu](mailto:larnold@berkeley.edu)) or Robert Schneider ([rschneider@berkeley.edu](mailto:rschneider@berkeley.edu)).

Optional: RSVP now to Lindsay Arnold ([larnold@berkeley.edu](mailto:larnold@berkeley.edu)), and provide some information about yourself:

Name:

Email:

Phone:

Cities/Locations in which you'd be interested in counting:

Thanks for helping to improve pedestrian and bicycle data collection in the Bay Area!